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Michael B. Gregg, M.D. --- 1930--2008

Michael B. Gregg, M.D., a retired *MMWR* Editor, died on July 9, 2008, in Brattleboro, Vermont. He was 78. Although he was widely accomplished in epidemiology and public health, Dr. Gregg was best known for his service as Editor of *MMWR* for 21 years, and for his editorship of the widely read textbook, *Field Epidemiology*.

As *MMWR* Editor during 1967--1988, Dr. Gregg strengthened the publication's ability to provide accurate and timely public health information to health-care and public health professionals and oversaw expansion of *MMWR* to accommodate a widening scope of public health topics ([1](#)). In 1981, Dr. Gregg made the decision to publish a report in *MMWR* about a cluster of five cases of a then-rare disease, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, among previously healthy young men in Los Angeles, California. The report appeared in the June 5, 1981 issue of *MMWR* ([2](#)). The accompanying Editorial Note said the case histories suggested a "cellular-immune dysfunction related to a common exposure" and a "disease acquired through sexual contact." Later, the report was recognized as the harbinger of what later became known as the HIV/AIDS epidemic ([3](#)). Other benchmarks during Dr. Gregg's *MMWR* editorship included citation of *MMWR* reports in *Index Medicus* and increased accessibility to *MMWR* articles through reproduction by the Massachusetts Medical Society and collaborative reprinting in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, practices that continue today.

Dr. Gregg joined CDC, then known as the Communicable Disease Center, in 1966 as Chief Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer (EISO) under Alexander Langmuir. At CDC he held a series of leadership positions until his retirement in 1990 as Acting Director of the Epidemiology Program Office. He was author of approximately 80 publications and book chapters, and his textbook, *Field Epidemiology*, now near publication in its third edition, has remained a standard in the discipline. Among his enduring legacies was his influence on hundreds of young EISOs, many of whom later served in key positions in medicine, epidemiology, and public health. Dr. Gregg was known for his skill at imbuing each incoming class of EISOs with an understanding of applied epidemiology and especially the epidemic investigation. He is remembered by his students as a mentor who was kind, polite, and gentlemanly, but also direct in imparting his high expectations of excellence.

Dr. Gregg was born in Paris, France, in 1930 and was educated at Stanford University and Western Reserve University School of Medicine. He completed a residency in internal medicine at Columbia Presbyterian

Hospital in New York City before entering the Public Health Service in 1959, and first served at the National Institutes of Health Rocky Mountain Laboratory. After further training in infectious diseases and work in Lahore, Pakistan, he began his career at CDC. During his years at CDC, he served as CDC's unofficial poet laureate, and he was an avid jazz drummer. He is survived by his wife Lila, three daughters, two brothers, a sister, seven grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on August 3 at Guilford Community Church in Guilford, Vermont. Contributions in the memory of Dr. Gregg can be made to the Epidemic Intelligence Service Association fund in care of the CDC Foundation at <http://www.cdcfoundation.org>, or by mail at The CDC Foundation, 55 Park Place, Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303.

References

1. [CDC. Michael B. Gregg, M.D., in honor of 21 years' service as Editor, *MMWR*. *MMWR* 1989;38:15.](#)
2. [CDC. Pneumocystis pneumonia---Los Angeles. *MMWR* 1981;30:250--2.](#)
3. [CDC. First report of AIDS. *MMWR* 2001;50:429.](#)



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